

**Historic District Review Committee
Staff Report
Date of Meeting: February 13, 2012
CAPP2012-0001
Historic District: Waterford
Project Planner: Lauren Murphy**

Action Item

CAPP 2012-0001 Waterford Foundation: Phillips Farm Interpretive Markers. PIN # 341-103-295.

Background

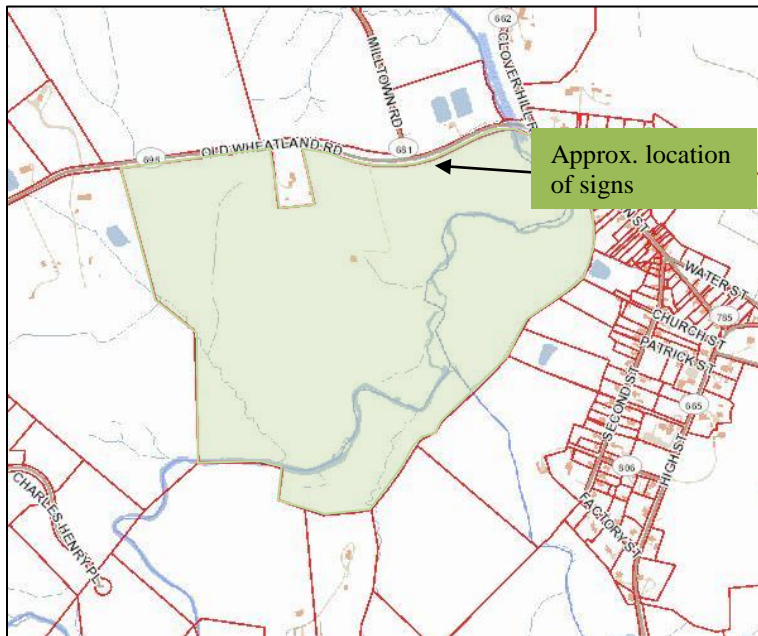


Figure 1: Subject Property, Phillips Farm, PIN # 341-10-3295

The subject property is approximately 144 acres located near the intersection of Milltown Road and Old Wheatland Road in the Waterford Historic District and is known as the Phillips Farm. The Waterford Foundation ("Foundation") is seeking approval for the placement of three interpretive markers to be located within a "pull-off area" which will overlook the northern portion of the Phillips Farm property. The farm makes up a majority portion of properties assembled between 1798 and 1832 by Thomas Phillips, a resident and businessman of Waterford. The property has

been in agricultural use since that time.

According to the zoning referral dated January 30, 2012, there are no issues with this application.

Analysis

While there are no specific guidelines for historic or interpretive markers, the Design Guidelines do provide general directions for signage. The Phillips Farm property was added to the Waterford Historic & Cultural Conservation District as a rural area property in 2011 and is reviewed under the Waterford Rural Area Guidelines adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 7, 2011. The Rural Guidelines for signage refer to Chapter 8 of the Historic District Guidelines: Waterford. Therefore, this application is

evaluated under the Historic District Guidelines: Waterford (“Guidelines” or “Waterford Guidelines”) Chapter 8, *Guidelines for Signs*.

The Guidelines call for a balance between the use of signage and the upholding of a “positive image of the entire district” (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Signs, Introduction, page 133, text). The proposed markers will be placed in a cluster at the pull-off area accessible from Old Wheatland Road. The purpose of the markers is to educate visitors about the history of the Farm while also serving as a “trailhead” for visitors who desire to explore the farm on foot. The Guidelines for signage state that: “A limit of two to three types, which can be of different types, is appropriate” (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Signs, Size and Number, page 134, Guideline 1). The Foundation is proposing three markers for this area, consistent with the Guidelines. The first will focus on transportation (Mill to Market), the second will focus on the history of the Phillips Farm, and the third will focus on conservation of natural resources.



Photo 1: Subject property as viewed from approximate area of pull-off

While the Guidelines support limiting the number of colors used on a sign to no more than three, they do allow for the introduction of additional colors in “exceptional and tastefully executed designs” (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Signs, Shape Color Materials and Lighting, page 135, Guideline 3). The proposed markers feature background photographs and other graphics which necessitate additional colors. However, the design of each marker is well linked to the others and well coordinated with the rural character of the Phillips Farm. The proposed markers have an aluminum frame with a dark brown finish and a fiberglass panel. The Guidelines for materials support the use of traditional sign materials, including metal. While fiberglass is not a traditional sign material, it may be appropriate in this instance given the location of the markers in an automobile pull-off area where a composite material, such as fiberglass, will protect against minor damage from vehicles.

The Guidelines state that freestanding signs should not exceed 16 square feet in size or 8 feet in height (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Signs, Shape Free-Standing Signs, page 139, Guidelines 1 and 2). The proposed markers are 6 square feet and less than 5 feet in height meeting the size and height guidelines for the Waterford District.

Findings

1. *The Guidelines do not provide specific criteria for historic markers or interpretive signs but do provide general guidance for commercial signs which can be applied to this application.*
2. *The application meets the general signage Guidelines for number, colors, and materials.*
3. *The markers meet the Guidelines for size and height of freestanding signs.*

Recommendation

Staff finds the application in compliance with the Guidelines for signage and recommends approval of the markers as submitted.

Suggested Motions

1. I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2012-0001 for the construction of three interpretive markers at the Phillips Farm (PIN 341-10-3295) in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 3 of the staff report dated February 13, 2012 as presented in the application.
2. I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2012-0001 for the construction of three interpretive markers at the Phillips Farm (PIN 341-10-3295) in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 3 of the staff report dated February 13, 2012 with the following conditions ...